

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 HALIFA 00480 121620Z  
ACTION EUR-12

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AMCONSUL VANCOUVER  
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UNCLAS HALIFAX 0480

E O 11652: N/A  
TAGS: PINT, CA  
SUBJECT: RESIGNATION OF PEI PREMIER ALEX CAMPBELL

1. PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND PREMIER ALEXANDER BRADSHAW CAMPBELL (L) ANNOUNCED HIS RESIGNATION AS PREMIER AND MEMBER OF THE PEI LEGISLATURE DURING A NEWS CONFERENCE IN CHARLOTTETOWN YESTERDAY AFTERNOON, SEPT 11. RESIGNATION WILL TAKE EFFECT ONLY AFTER THE PROVINCIAL LIBERAL PARTY EXECUTIVE AND CAUCUS SELECT AN INTERIM LEADER AND PREMIER CAMPBELL SUBMITS HIS RESIGNATION TOGETHER WITH HIS NOMINATION OF THE INTERIM LEADER FOR PREMIER TO LT. GOVERNOR GORDON BENNETT, PROBABLY ON FRIDAY OR SATURDAY OF THIS WEEK.

2. CAMPBELL, 44, HAS BEEN PREMIER SINCE 1966, WHEN, AT AGE 32, HE BECAME THE THIRD YOUNGEST MAN IN CANADIAN HISTORY TO HOLD A PROVINCIAL PREMIERSHIP. HE HAS LED HIS LIBERAL PARTY TO VICTORY IN FOUR GENERAL ELECTIONS, THE LAST  
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ON APRIL 24 OF THIS YEAR. IN ADDITION TO THE PREMIERSHIP, HE IS ALSO RESIGNING FROM HIS CABINET POSTS AS MINISTER OF JUSTICE, ATTORNEY GENERAL, PRESIDENT OF EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, AND MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR CULTURAL AFFAIRS.

3. CAMPBELL SAID IN HIS NEWS CONFERENCE THAT: "AFTER A

DOZEN YEARS, YOUR LIFE AS THE FOREMOST POLITICIAN IN THE PROVINCE BECOMES SOMEWHAT CLAUSTROPHOBIC. EVERY MINUTE OF THE DAY AND NIGHT YOU'RE THE PREMIER. I FEEL LIKE GETTING AWAY WITH MY WIFE AND JUST BEING JOHN Q. PUBLIC TO GET SOME PERSPECTIVE YOU DON'T GET AS PREMIER." CAMPBELL HAS NOT YET INDICATED HIS FUTURE PLANS. THERE IS PRESS SPECULATION THAT HE MAY ACCEPT A POSITION AS JUSTICE OF THE PEI SUPREME COURT, A PATTERN SET BY HIS FATHER, FORMER PREMIER AND LATER SUPREME COURT JUSTICE THANE CAMPBELL.

4. W BENNETT CAMPBELL, 35, PEI MINISTER OF FINANCE AND EDUCATION, IS CONSIDERED AS THE MOST PROBABLY CHOICE AS THE INTERIM LEADER AND NEW PREMIER. HE IS THOUGHT TO HAVE THE SUPPORT OF PREMIER ALEX CAMPBELL.

5. THE STANDINGS IN THE 32-SEAT PEI LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOLLOWING THE LAST GENERAL ELECTION WERE: LIBERALS - 17, PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVES - 15. WITH PREMIER CAMPBELL'S RESIGNATION, THE LIBERALS ARE REDUCED TO 16 SEATS, A MAJORITY OF ONLY ONE SEAT, AND THAT HELD BY THE SPEAKER, WHO CAN ONLY VOTE TO BREAK A TIE. THERE IS NO LEGAL REQUIREMENT IN PEI TO HOLD PROVINCIAL BY-ELECTIONS. GIVEN THIS NARROW MAJORITY, THE NEW PREMIER MAY WELL DECIDE TO CALL A NEW GENERAL ELECTION BEFORE JUNE OF 1979.

6. CONOFF TALKED WITH A CLOSE ASSOCIATE OF CAMPBELL AND UNCLASSIFIED

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MEMBER OF HIS STAFF CONCERNING THE PREMIER'S RESIGNATION AND FUTURE PEI POLITICS. HE CONFIRMED THE PREMIER'S SUPPORT FOR BENNETT CAMPBELL AS HIS SUCCESSOR AND SAID THAT THE REASONS GIVEN IN PRESS REPORTS FOR THE PREMIER'S RESIGNATION, A WEARINESS WITH POLITICS AND A DESIRE TO RETURN TO PRIVATE LIFE AFTER 12 YEARS IN OFFICE, ARE CORRECT.

7. COMMENT: CAMPBELL HAS BEEN AN EFFECTIVE AND POPULAR LEADER OF CANADA'S SMALLEST PROVINCE. HE PLACED PEI ON A FIRM FINANCIAL BASIS, GAVE CONSIDERABLE THOUGHT AND EFFORT TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROVINCE WHILE PRESERVING ITS LIFE STYLE UNDER THE SLOGANS "SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL" AND "THE ISLAND WAY OF LIFE". HE WORKED TO PROMOTE CO-OPERATION AMONG THE ATLANTIC PROVINCES AND HAS BEEN A STRONG ADVOCATE OF CANADIAN UNITY. A WELL-SPOKEN, INTELLIGENT, HONEST, AND SYMPATHETIC MAN, CAMPBELL, SOMETIMES TERMED "THE ISLAND S PHILOSOPHER-KING", WILL BE MISSED BY MANY.  
MOORE

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## Message Attributes

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